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APPEL Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Acceptable Usage Policy

1. **Purpose**

APPEL is committed to providing an efficient, secure and reliable IT platform and service from which to carry out placement-related activities. The purpose of this Policy is to provide all users of APPPEL's VLE with clear guidance on the acceptable, safe and legal way in which they can use the system. Your engagement with APPEL shall be on the basis that you have read, understood and agreed with the terms of this policy.

This Policy is without prejudice to the right to privacy as protected by the Irish constitution and the European convention on human rights.

2. **Policy Scope**

This Policy covers documentation of policy, procedures, and standards relating to the APPEL VLE.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

APPEL's responsibilities:
- Monitoring use of the APPEL VLE to ensure this Policy is not breached.
- Acting on breaches to this Policy and bringing any breaches to the attention of the Director and National Coordinator of APPEL, the APPEL board, RCSI (acting as primary data controller) and/or an appropriate authority.
- APPEL reserves and intends to exercise the right to review, audit, intercept, assess and disclose all messages created within the APPEL VLE. Notwithstanding APPEL's right to retrieve and read such messages, they should be treated by the user as confidential, and accessed only by the intended recipient(s).
- APPEL retains absolute discretion to access the contents of any folders held on the VLE in a user's name.

Each user's responsibilities:
- Complying with this Policy and all other relevant policies and procedures.
- Reporting all breaches of this Policy to ops@appel.ie.
- Users are responsible and accountable for all activities carried out under their username. Users have responsibility for access via their password, and hence also have responsibility for illicit use of that password, with or without consent. Any user who fails to take reasonable steps to protect their password and account, or fails to report potential account violations, breaches this Policy and may be liable for any consequences which follow if another person makes use of their account.
  If a user suspects that their password has become known to someone else, they should change it immediately. Passwords should be chosen with care. Do not use a dictionary word or a name, and follow the requirements listed by the VLE when setting the password. Treat passwords as

you would a credit card – safe and secure. Initial passwords for non-student users are created on the APPEL VLE by an automated process.

- Users agree to adhere to the VLE security standards set by APPEL, including but not limited to meeting password-setting requirements and regular updating of antivirus and malware software on all devices used on the APPEL VLE.

4. **Policy**

Acceptable Use
- All details provided to APPEL by users, including personal information, is to be exclusively used for purposes related to APPEL placements and the provision of experiential education, and must be managed in line with Data Protection legislation.
- Users who process (or intend processing) personal data about others on a computer are obliged to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Acts as amended, updated or replaced from time to time, and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- The APPEL VLE may not be used to transmit, store or access text, images, recordings, scripts, programs or telephone calls containing personal data as defined by the Data Protection Acts/GDPR unless the subjects' permission has been explicitly given in writing.
- Users acknowledge that all activity on the APPEL VLE is monitored and audited for breaches to the acceptable usage policy.

Unacceptable Use
- Using the APPEL VLE to engage in any form of bullying or other behaviour likely to cause harassment to others.
- Using the APPEL VLE to engage in any activity that is illegal under national or international law.
- Using social media to degrade, bully or intentionally offend APPEL staff, students or other users, or using these tools to bring the reputation of APPEL or any of the HEIs into disrepute.
- Gaining unauthorised access to the account, systems or equipment of any third party. 'Hacking' (unauthorised breaking into networks/computers) may result in criminal prosecution.
- Using another user's APPEL account or allowing others to use your APPEL account for any reason. This includes the provision of your APPEL account information in response to solicited information requests via email or phone.
- Using the APPEL VLE for undertaking commercial activities or otherwise furthering commercial objectives which are unrelated to APPEL placement activity.
- Infringing the copyright, patent or other intellectual property rights of any person or organisation.
- Infringing the data protection or other privacy rights of any person.
- Use of APPEL systems or resource to facilitate plagiarism or cheating in exams or assignments.
- Knowingly introducing any virus, malware or other destructive program or device into the APPEL VLE.
- Knowingly engaging in activities that waste computing resources on the APPEL VLE.
- Accessing, reading, changing, copying or deleting any text, files or software without permission from the owner or APPEL.

APPEL reserves the right to remove material from its VLE which it deems to be unsuitable. Any consequences of removal of unsuitable material are the responsibility of the user. APPEL is authorised to

read any file stored on the VLE and, if it is necessary to safeguard the integrity of the VLE, to delete any file without warning.

Persons found contravening these regulations will be subject to disciplinary procedure up to and including denial of access to the VLE, withdrawal of TE or Trainer accreditation, HEI code of conduct disciplinary procedures for students, and/or criminal procedures.

Matching Processes
- All APPEL matching processes operate according to a series of specified deadlines. Both students and training establishments must comply with specified APPEL deadlines. APPEL cannot accommodate any individual requests, by either students or training establishments, for an extension to a deadline where it has been missed. APPEL cannot be held responsible for any consequences that may arise as a result of either students or training establishments failing to comply with a specified deadline.
- APPEL will not accept responsibility for any false or misleading information provided to APPEL by either students or training establishments.
- The provision by a training establishment of details of their APPEL placement(s) only confirms the availability of placement(s) and cannot be construed to constitute any commitment on the part of the training establishment to review any or all of the details of students who select that training establishment (thereby inviting the training establishment to review their details and consider offering them a placement).
- Where a training establishment asks to meet with a student during the placement process, it is a matter for both the training establishment and the student to agree the arrangements for the meeting within the specified period.
- By offering a placement to a student through the APPEL matching system, a training establishment is agreeing to provide a placement to that student if they accept the offer.
- By accepting a placement offer, a student is commiting to attend that placement.
- Where a student accepts the offer of a placement, both the student's and the placement's participation in the matching programme has completed.
- Training establishments are not permitted to make an offer of a placement outside of the APPEL matching process. Any placement arrangements agreed to outside the matching process will not be recognised by APPEL or the student's Higher Education Institution.

Operational Procedures

- If a non-student username/email address already exists, the newer user must select an alternative.
- Non-student users are subject to Moodle username and password rules. By default, the user's email address—in lower case letters—is the username. The password must have at least 8 characters, at least 1 digit(s), at least 1 lower case letter(s), at least 1 upper case letter(s), and at least 1 non-alphanumeric character(s) such as as *, -, or #.
- Student usernames and passwords are the responsibility of the HEIs, and student logins are verified through the HEAnet's Edugate. Any student username or password issues must be raised with the student's HEI.
- If a user is not active on the account (e.g., a student taking time off or a TE not taking a student) user access to the account is maintained by APPEL.